

MEDIA ALERT

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For immediate release

October 16, 2013

LA SALLE SETS PREEMINENT STANDARD FOR DRUG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

CINCINNATI, OHIO, OCTOBER 16, 2013 – La Salle High School has established the preeminent standard for drug prevention and intervention that will be mandatory for all students in the 2014-15 academic year. This new standard reinforces students' good decisions, champions personal accountability, and sets the utmost expectations for behavior outside of the classroom. The students will participate in a voluntary program for the 2013-14 academic year.

"The La Salle drug prevention and intervention program supports students as they navigate high school and prepare to enter college and future careers. It also offers peace of mind to parents," said Principal Thomas Luebbe.

La Salle will become only the second high school in Ohio to require its entire student population to participate in drug testing. "One of the reasons for this program is to set the maximum standard of behavior for our students that will, by design, carry over into their adult lives," Luebbe said. "We partner closely with our students' parents, and together we're encouraging each student to reach his maximum potential in mind, body and spirit. This program will be successful if we help even one student avoid substances that could harm him or derail his future."

"We are pleased to partner with La Salle High School to assist them with building out their comprehensive substance abuse prevention and intervention program because we know no single strategy alone is effective," said Mary Haag, president and CEO of the Coalition for a Drug-Free Greater Cincinnati. Founded in 1996, the organization promotes drug-free environments for youth by enhancing partnerships to educate, advocate, and support local-based community mobilization.

"No community, school, or person is immune to substance abuse. But being proactive, starting early, and providing consistent doses of prevention leads to fewer problem behaviors," Haag said. "In fact, setting clear boundaries and expectations is the developmental asset most strongly related to lower levels of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use in young people."

Mr. Luebbe said that four other Lasallian high schools in the U.S. have similar programs. “It was very evident that once the schools presented clear and measurable expectations, student behaviors followed accordingly,” he explained. “No longer did students take chances or succumb to peer pressure. It gave them a reason to say ‘no’ and relieved them of the peer pressure anxiety. It was clearly the right step to support proper behaviors.”

Mr. Luebbe further stated, “Our Lasallian charism, as noted in the words of our school crest – ‘mens, corpus, anima’ (‘mind, body, soul’) challenges every Lancer to fully develop all aspects of his whole person for the Glory of God, which is difficult to do when using drugs. Furthermore, our Catholic faith calls each person to respect his human body as a blessing from God, a temple of the Holy Spirit, created in His image and likeness. It is important for us to emphasize this value continually to our Lancers and to provide them the encouragement and resources to embrace all aspects of this responsibility.”

La Salle has secured the services of Psychemedics Corporation to provide testing for drugs of abuse using hair analysis. Psychemedics has performed testing for companies throughout the country since 1987, and a decade later, began testing students. Psychemedics now provides these services at more than 250 schools in the country to help students stay free of drugs. One such school is St. John Jesuit High School & Academy in Toledo, the first in Ohio to provide mandatory testing of all students.

In La Salle’s program, each student will be selected randomly to be tested once during the first semester. Then, a portion of the student population will be selected randomly to be tested again during the second semester, according to Greg Tankersley, the school’s Director of Community Development. If a student tests positive, he will be required to seek immediate counseling intervention.

“We will act with compassion. If a student makes the wrong decision, we want him to get the support he needs to avoid making the same mistake twice,” Tankersley explained. “The student will be tested again in approximately 100 days after the first positive. Any student who tests positive twice during their career at La Salle will no longer be permitted to remain as a student,” he said.

“Parents expect their children will have opportunities and practice behaviors that will prepare them for their adult lives,” Tankersley said. “Many companies and organizations require pre-employment and random drug testing. This is a way of life for many Americans. By helping our young men make prudent, faith-filled decisions that are good for the present, we are preparing them for the future, too.” Added Tankersley, “Drug use of any kind is a behavior that does not go hand-in-hand with becoming a responsible and successful member of society.”

La Salle High School is an all-male college preparatory Catholic institution guided by Jesus Christ and rooted in the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle. In partnership with parents, La Salle educates young men of all backgrounds, encouraging each student to reach his maximum potential: mind, body, and spirit. La Salle strives to develop every student into a servant leader, equipped with the experience and confidence to lead ethically in a 21st century environment.

For more information on this program, visit www.lasallehs.net/preeminent. Media interviews will be granted Wednesday, October 16, from 12- 2 by appointment. Contact Greg Tankersley, Director of Community Development, to schedule.

La Salle is located at 3091 North Bend Road in Green Township and has served students from the Greater Cincinnati area since 1960. The school website is www.lasallehs.net.

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